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ABSTRACT

DESIGN CRITERIA, STANDARDS, AND HUMAN FACTORS
RELATED TO DESIGNING AND PLANNING FLEXIBLE AND EFFICIENT WORK
ENVIRONMENTS FOR COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS ARE OVERVIEWED WITH SIX
MODEL (EXAMPLE) OFFICE PLANS INCLUDED. THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
DESIGN NEEDS IN SUCH AN OFFICE FACILITY ARE GIVEN, WITH TASK
PERFORMANCE DATA ON STUDENT FACULTY COMMUNICATION, WALL AND SPACE
UTILIZATION, AND FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT. DRAWINGS AND FLOOR PLANS ARE
INCLUDED. (TG)

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THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE

The Educator's "Action" Office is designed to be a free and flexible working environment which serves to enhance the individuality and potential of the educator and his students.

DIKRAN J. MARTIN

Instructional Research and Development Paper
Number One

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE

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INTRODUCTION

A Human Factors Approach to Educational Design

This paper is a critical comment about the *working environment* of the college faculty member. Its special focus is a discriminating assessment of some inhibiting features in the physical and psychological condition of this present environment that lower educational efficiency and productivity and serve to alienate the instructor from his students, his colleagues and other individuals who wish to communicate with him. The premise forwarded by the writer is that certain attitudes regarding the needs and requirements of college educators and students must be clarified before the institution can further expand its building program.

The overriding theme in this paper is that the maximum potential of the college's educational program can be achieved only by a significant increase in faculty and student involvement in wide scale campus planning and development. A supporting principle of this theme is that all persons involved in college planning activities must understand the efficiency of *freedom and flexibility* as a necessary condition when developing concepts and policies related to the design of educational facilities. It cannot be too strongly stated that the only atmosphere in which an institution of higher learning can fulfill its assigned role is the atmosphere that *accentuates the growth of faculty and student potentialities*. The fact is that the design of the educational environment can and does influence the behavior of those working within this environment. If the environment is not conducive to the purpose of the educational endeavor the student will suffer because he must struggle to overcome its handicaps while at the same time strive to achieve his educational purpose. At all institutions of higher learning the members of the professional staff and those students interested in the total development of the institution must combine their efforts to formulate a *system of values* regarding the educational design of classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices and other *vicinities of instruction*. Campus planning and development must be a *democratic endeavor* with the impetus emanating from the faculty and students whose needs the institution ought to recognize and strive to reconcile. The following remarks about the EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE and the INTERPRETIVE CLASSROOM (an accompanying paper) are designed as an approach to correct the performing environment of the faculty member and his students and make it more adaptable to the contemporary demands of learning, problem-solving and thinking in higher education. If the working environment of the educator and his students is so corrupted by numerous conditions of distraction and stress (i.e., lack of adequate space, absence of necessary equipment, disconcerting features of sound and lighting) this reduces their efficiency and productivity when trying to succeed in the intellectual and aesthetic enterprise of higher learning. An expanding educational environment that proceeds without taking human factors into consideration will reduce the range and depth of the educator's talents and restrain the development of intellectual power, attitudes towards increased aesthetic appreciation, and the performing skills of the student.

THE EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE

A Superior Vicinity of Instruction

There is a trend in higher education today that is gaining attention and importance as colleges grow and attempt to increase their effectiveness. This is the tendency to give greater attention to *vicinities of instruction that extend beyond the classroom*. The typical classroom oriented lecture and demonstration methods of instruction are being expanded upon by curricular arrangements which demand the best performance of every student in a *variety of learning environments*. In other words, the common lecture room furnished with tablet arm chairs and the standard science laboratory are no longer considered the *only* regions of learning on the college campus. College centers are obviously gaining in importance as learning environments, off-campus study programs apparently have great merit, and elaborate co-curricular activities are evolving on most campuses. This writer finds it most interesting that one vicinity of instruction on the college campus has not been given serious consideration in terms of enhancing its effectiveness as a learning environment: the office of the faculty member. The fact that this environment has not been given adequate attention in terms of enhancing its capabilities for instruction is quite amazing when one considers the accelerated growth of higher education in this country today. The faculty office is a neglected environment at our college. It is a wasted environment for both the faculty member and his students. This neglect is deplorable and costly but it need not continue. The situation is correctable if the attitudes towards this environment are reappraised by professional educators and college trustees. Such a reappraisal means that this environment must no longer be construed as a storage room, a place to correct examinations, or a spot to rest between classes. A new—and more appropriate attitude—would be to view the faculty office as an environment which promotes a *greater personalization of learning, problem-solving and thinking*. It is the best environment for the student to profit from individualized instruction through a more immediate and personal confrontation with his instructor. Specifically, the faculty office can provide an atmosphere for the educator to develop numerous variations in the *conference and discovery approach* to learning. The conference-discovery approach in learning relies less on the rigid one-way delivery of knowledge (i.e., lecture-demonstration) and more upon small-group techniques which stress *idea development and mutual problem-solving*. Studies at various colleges in the country clearly demonstrate that the conference-discovery method of instruction can go far to stimulate a student to work greater heights, that it can produce an identity with and commitment to and intellectual discipline which even the most eloquent lecturer cannot accomplish. It appears that the conference and discovery approach in the hands of skilled college faculty members may be the most productive teaching-learning situation yet devised by educators.

The EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE concept is a proposal designed to help correct the working environment of the faculty member. The foundation for the concept of the EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE is based on two propositions. First, the functions of the college faculty member are to *read, write, talk and think*. Second, the faculty member does all these things best in a free and flexible working environment which serves to enhance his individuality and potential as a professional striving to help students develop as educated individuals. The educational design of his

office should build on these two propositions.

The office furnishings and their physical arrangements should provide the educator an acceptable environment for receiving visitors, whether they be colleagues, students, parents or visitors from the community. Various communication arrangements should be considered. For example, in an academic environment the ideal conference pattern is not face-to-face verbal delivery but flexible diversified seating arrangements where the participants sit in diagonal positions to one another. Such arrangements are quite helpful for the educator and student because they encourage two-way democratic participation in discussions.

The wall space of the EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE should be made useable for quick communication. There should be plenty of bulletin board space and a blackboard, so ideas can stay out and alive. The atmosphere of the office should reflect the diverse dimensions of the faculty member's discipline. If the educator is provided adequate useable wall space in his office he can develop a stimulating atmosphere for the students that visit him by positioning diagrams, pictures, charts or maps in optimum strategical arrangements about the room. A small projector screen might be functionally mounted so the instructor can view overhead projection transparencies and 35 mm. filmstrips and slides with small groups of students and colleagues. Generally, the EDUCATOR'S ACTION OFFICE provides a new liberality in the use of space and is slanted toward the idea that the faculty office is designed to get work done, not stored away.

The furniture of the ACTION OFFICE should be designed to meet the needs of a scholar and teacher. The single pedestal interview type desk with side chair that is offered the faculty member today serves only to harshly limit his operating environment. Sharing an office with another faculty member is another obvious feature of present arrangements that only *reinforces reduced productivity*. The faculty member must have the dignity and privacy of his own office. No type of "gang" arrangement in offices makes any sense at all in higher education. The faculty member should be able to make his choice between a wide double pedestal desk or, perhaps, some L-unit arrangement. The single side chair without arms should be abandoned in favor of a number of conference-type arm chairs. If the faculty member requests it, a stand-up desk, very wide, so papers and materials can be spread laterally, not piled up in a vertical bottleneck, should be provided. An optional furnishing would be a high stool with back rest if he expects to spend long periods of time at the stand-up desk. Additional accessories like cabinet units and bookcase components (not fastened down) should be provided.

All furniture in the ACTION OFFICE must not be rigidly stationary but, instead, subject to rearrangement. All offices should be carpeted. The durability and low maintenance features of modern day floor coverings with their additional low noise and aesthetic characteristics make them far more acceptable than wood or asphalt tile in an office.

What is the ideal size of the ACTION OFFICE? This will probably vary depending on the needs and requirements of the faculty member, but this writer cannot conceive it being any smaller than 150 square feet. An argument occasionally heard is that if one plans a faculty office in

excess of 100 square feet "they" ("they" are usually unspecified) will try to turn them into *two-man offices*. This is an unfortunate defensive mode of reasoning that seems to sufficiently threaten the faculty member into silence when he asks for more operating space. The answer to this rationale is a firm stand on a declared and never to be forgotten edict that the ACTION OFFICE is a *vicinity of instruction* for the faculty member and his students and it would be damaging and unreasonable to corrupt it in the light of the needs and requirements of contemporary higher education. If the degree of energy committed to the philosophy of the ACTION OFFICE as an important vicinity of instruction roughly approximates that given to issues of academic freedom, the faculty can worry less about the threat that "they" will try to turn these desirable operating environments into costly and useless "gang" offices.

A final note: A simple principle in human behavior is that man is *not* a perfectly adaptable organism. Of course, no one has ever formally asserted that the human being was perfectly adaptable, but people responsible for developing academic operating environments (the classroom, laboratory and the faculty office) seem to act as if the human flexibility of the faculty member and the student are sufficient to make possible all important adjustments in a poor educational environment. Human factors research and the careful observation of people performing in a number of defined operating environments clearly demonstrate that this is not so. If one wishes to waste the talents and productivity of any individual working in any situation, one may simply make him perform in a discouraging and inadequate environment. Unfortunately, few people are sensitized to the proper development and utilization of operating environments for those who must exist within these environments. This is not just a problem of educational environments because similar handicapped operating environments can be found in business and industry, government, and all of the professions. However, perhaps educational environments are most susceptible to the damaging effects of an inefficient atmosphere because of the multiple and diverse demands that are made upon faculty members and their students. Today, heightened attention must be given to the nonhuman (structural) elements of the working system of the faculty member and the student. Clear recognition must be given to the glaring fact that even the most skilled faculty member and dedicated student *need help* from their operating environment in order to demonstrate the range and depth of their talents and productivity. Unless certain attitudes toward building design develop along suitable lines commensurate with the needs and requirements of faculty members and students, those who constantly request further creative innovations in instruction cannot expect much of a response to their demands. What is needed is a committed interest on the part of educators to sophisticate their attitudes regarding the appropriate development of the vicinities of instruction in higher education.

THE EDUCATORS' "ACTION" OFFICE
Statement on Standards

- Standard No. 1: The "ACTION" OFFICE is designed for *single instructor occupancy*.
- Standard No. 2: The "ACTION" OFFICE is designed on the basis of a minimum of 150 square feet per individual office.
- Standard No. 3: The "ACTION" OFFICE should face the outside wall of buildings and shall contain windows.
- Standard No. 4: The "ACTION" OFFICE is designed to make it possible for the faculty member to reflect the diverse dimensions of his discipline. This standard will be implemented by allowing for the necessary positioning of bulletin board(s), chalk board(s) and shelving.
- Standard No. 5: The "ACTION" OFFICE is designed to include at least a selection of the following furnishings:
- a) Desk (either double pedestal or L-unit type).
 - b) Desk chair with arms, swivel and posture control.
 - c) Conference armchairs.
 - d) Bookcases.
 - e) Individual wardrobe cabinet.
 - f) File cabinets.
 - g) Storage cabinets.
 - h) Work table which is suitable for small group instruction or conference.
 - i) Drawing board and stand-up stool.
- Standard No. 6: The "ACTION" OFFICE should be carpeted whenever possible.
- Standard No. 7: The "ACTION" OFFICE should be constructed to resist undesirable external noises.

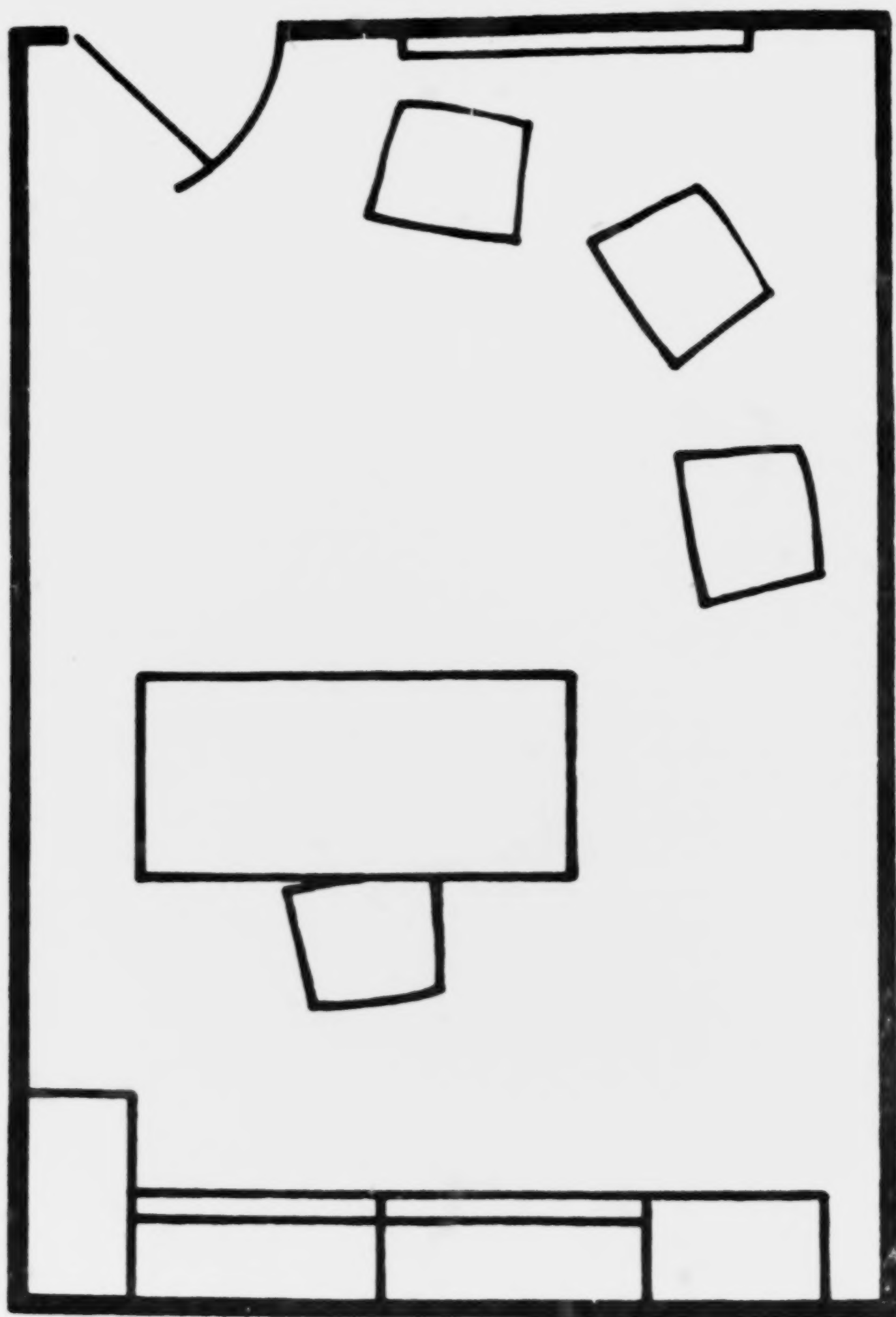
THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE
Design Possibility Number One

Furnishings and equipment might include:

1. Double pedestal conference desk.
2. Swivel arm chair.
3. Guest arm chairs.
4. Wall mounted tack board with magazine rack.
5. Wardrobe storage.
6. Knee space counter behind desk.
7. Base storage and counter mount book shelf storage.
8. File cabinet.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Counseling.
2. Behavioral Science.
3. Social Science.
4. Language Arts.
5. Business and Economics.
6. English and Philosophy.
7. Humanities.
8. Physical Education.



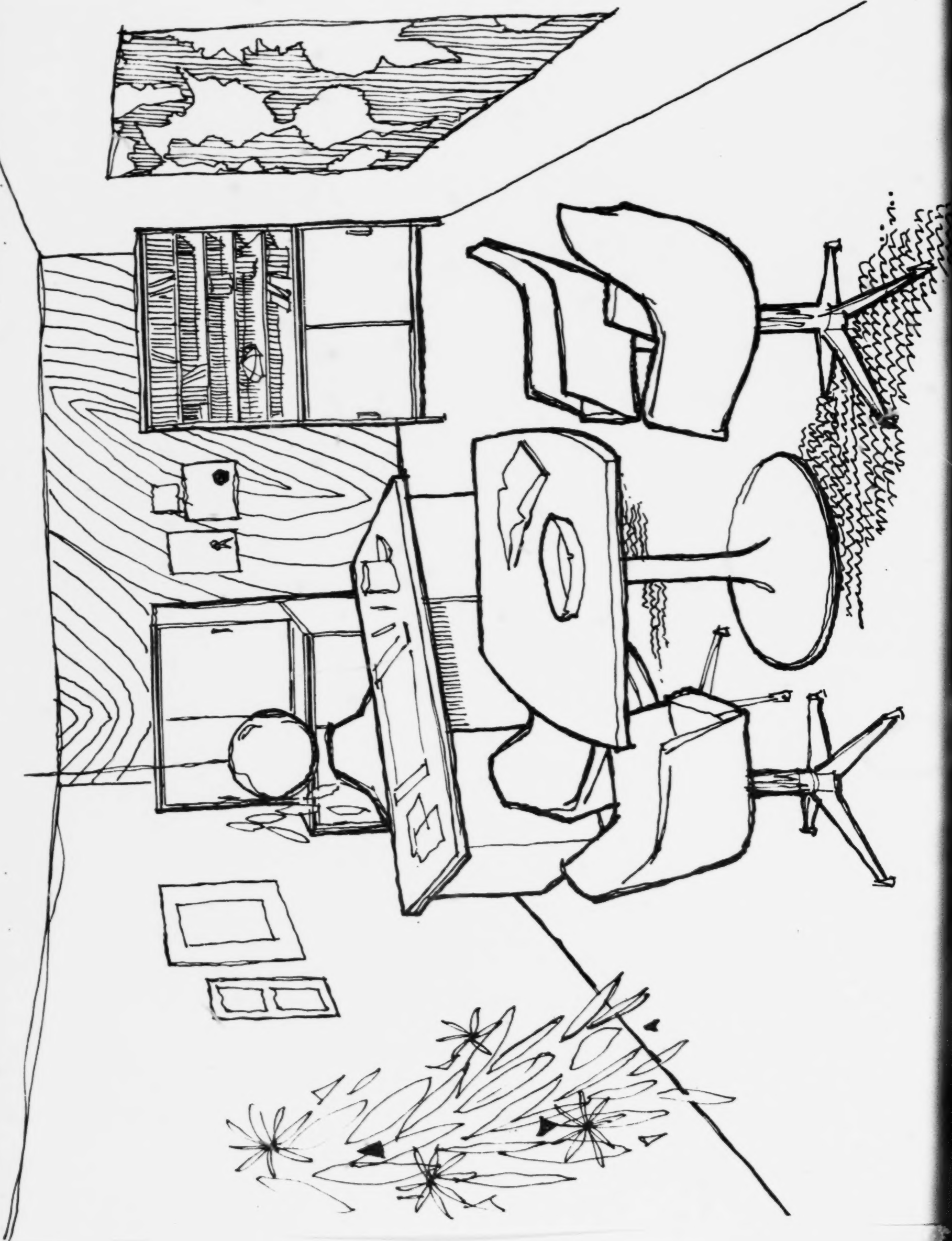
THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE
Design Possibility Number Two

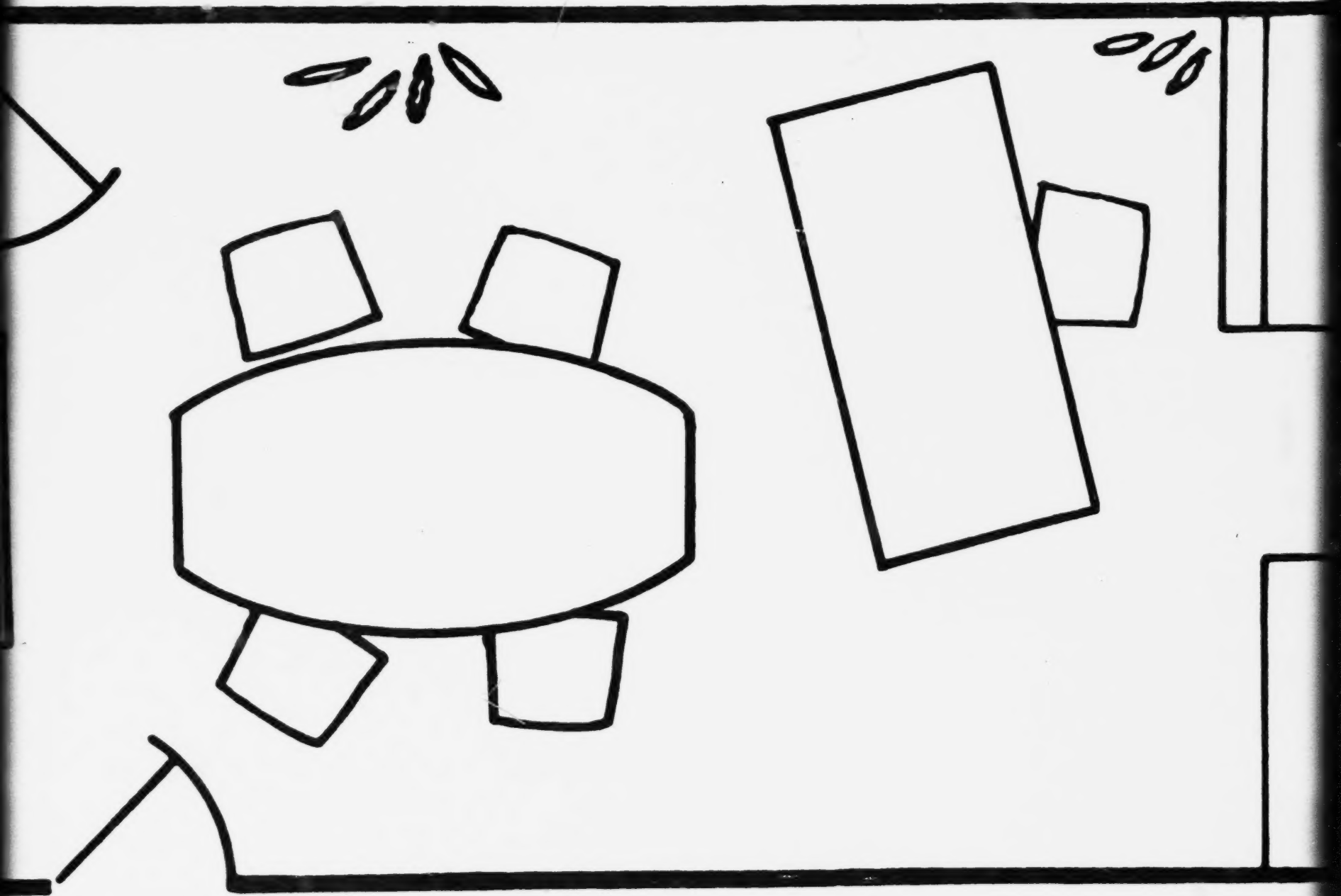
Furnishings and equipment might include:

1. Double pedestal conference desk.
2. Swivel arm chair.
3. Chalk and/or tack board—wall mounted.
4. Conversation-study center: conference table, conference chairs.
5. Base storage area with counter stacked and closed storage above.
6. Base storage area with open book shelf storage above.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Behavioral Science.
2. Social Science.
3. Counseling.
4. English and Philosophy.
5. Language Arts.
6. Administration.
7. Business and Economics.
8. Humanities.
9. Instructional Research and Development.





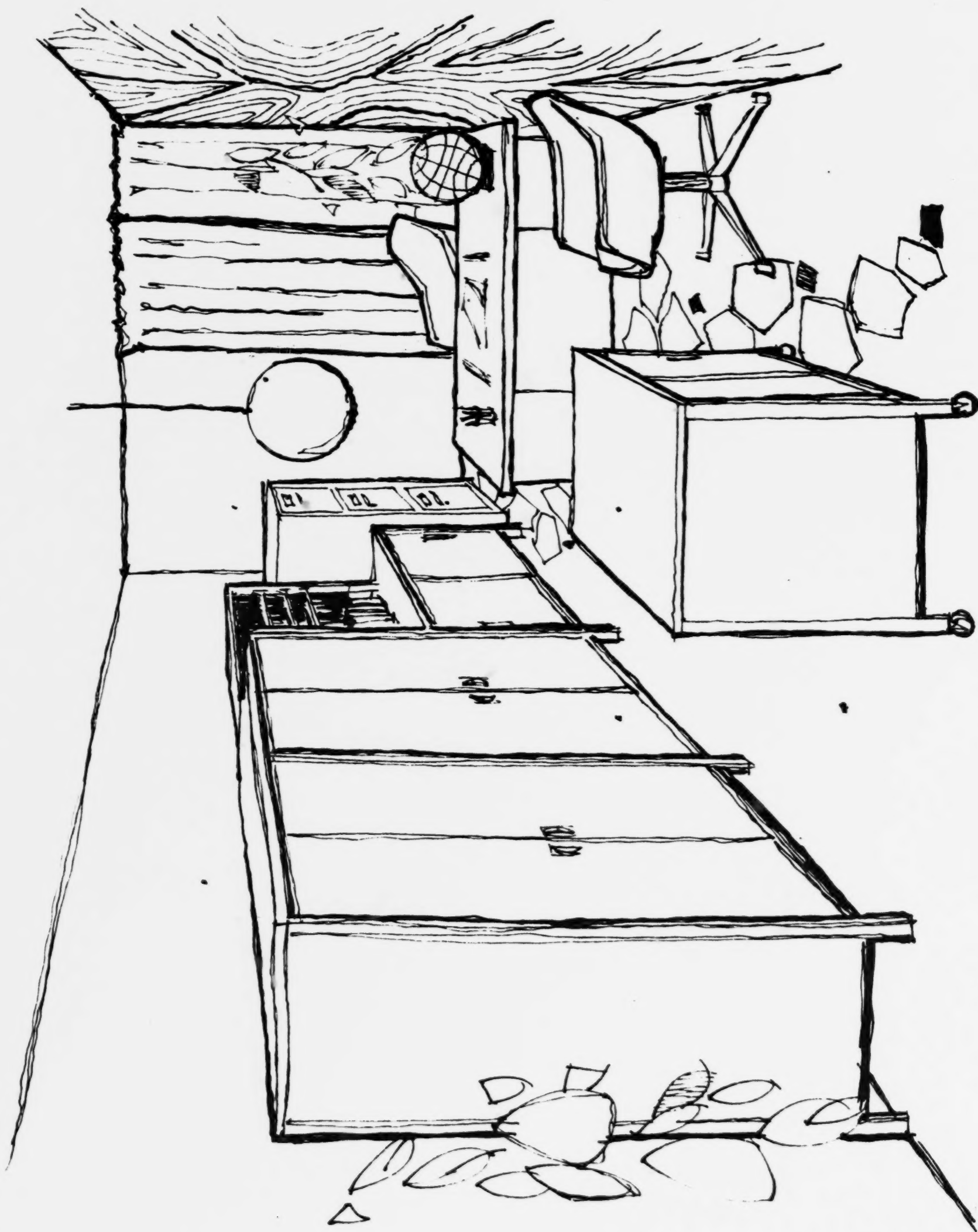
THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE
Design Possibility Number Three

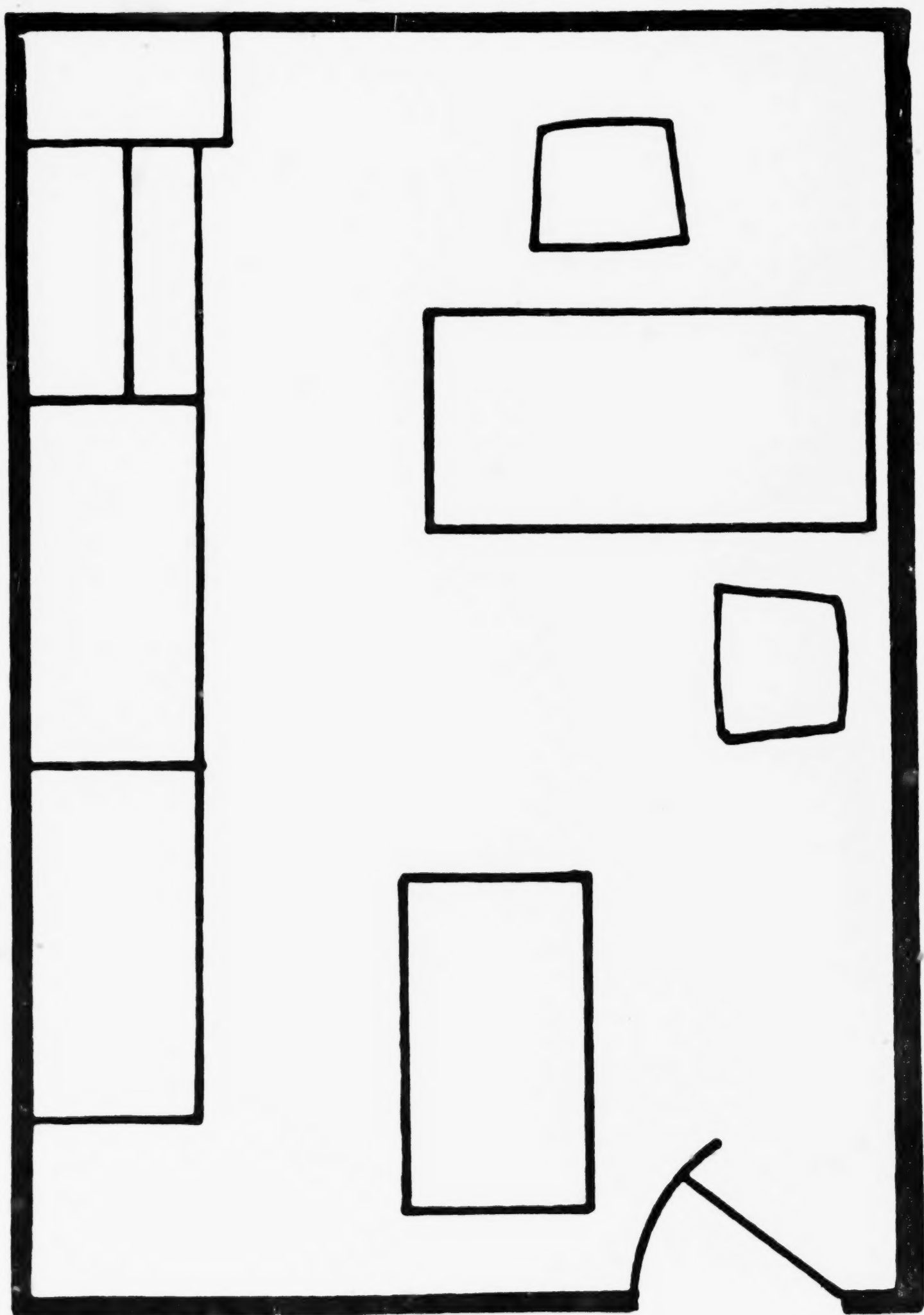
Furnishings and equipment might include:

1. Double pedestal desk.
2. Swivel arm chair.
3. Guest arm chair.
4. Portable demonstration cart.
5. High storage cabinets.
6. Tack board on face of hinged doors.
7. Base storage with open storage above.
8. Wall tack or chalk board.
9. File cabinet.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Vocational and Technical Education.
2. Biological, Earth and Physical Science.
3. Art and Architecture.
4. Engineering.
5. Physical Education.
6. Instructional Research and Development.





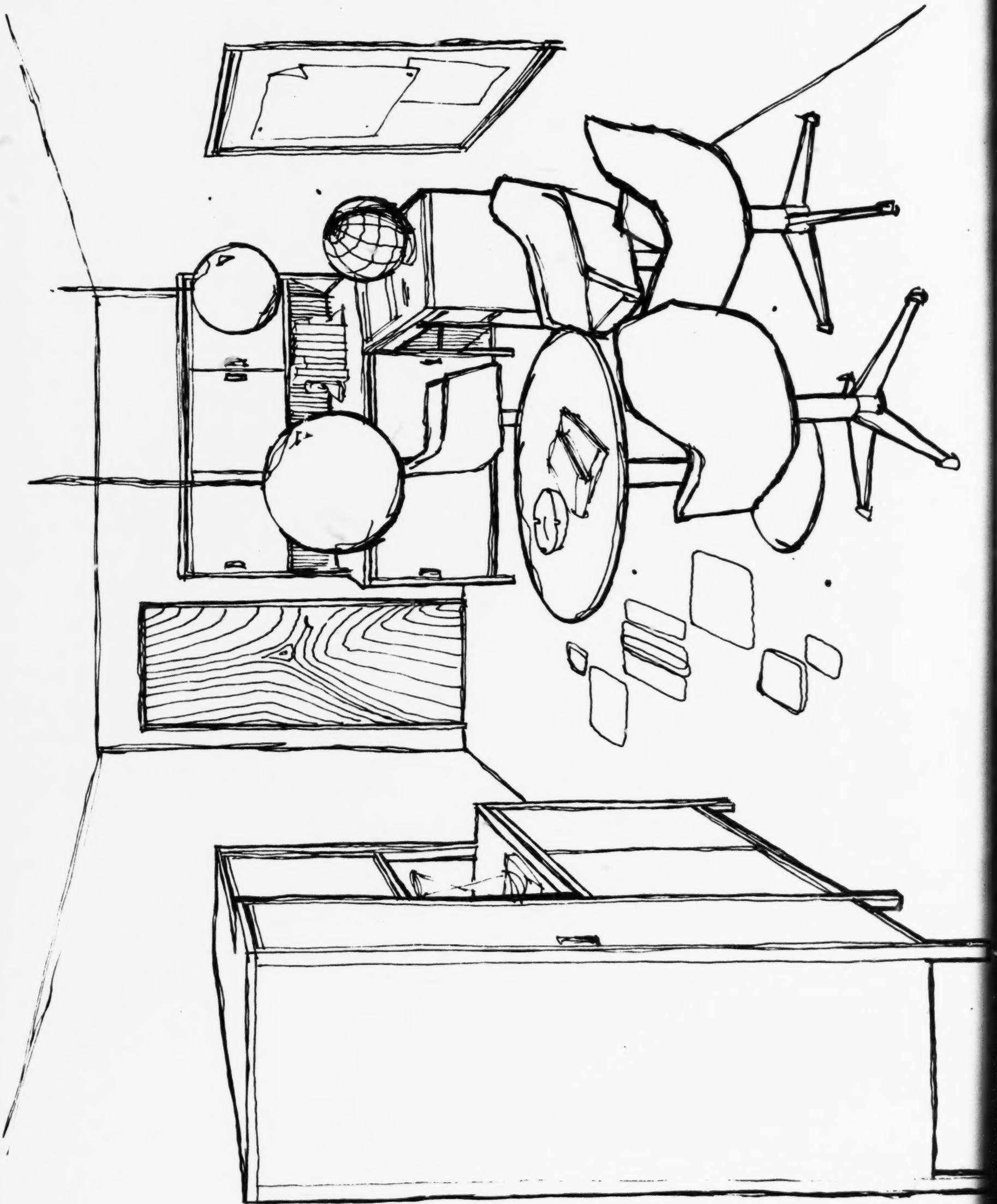
THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE
Design Possibility Number Four

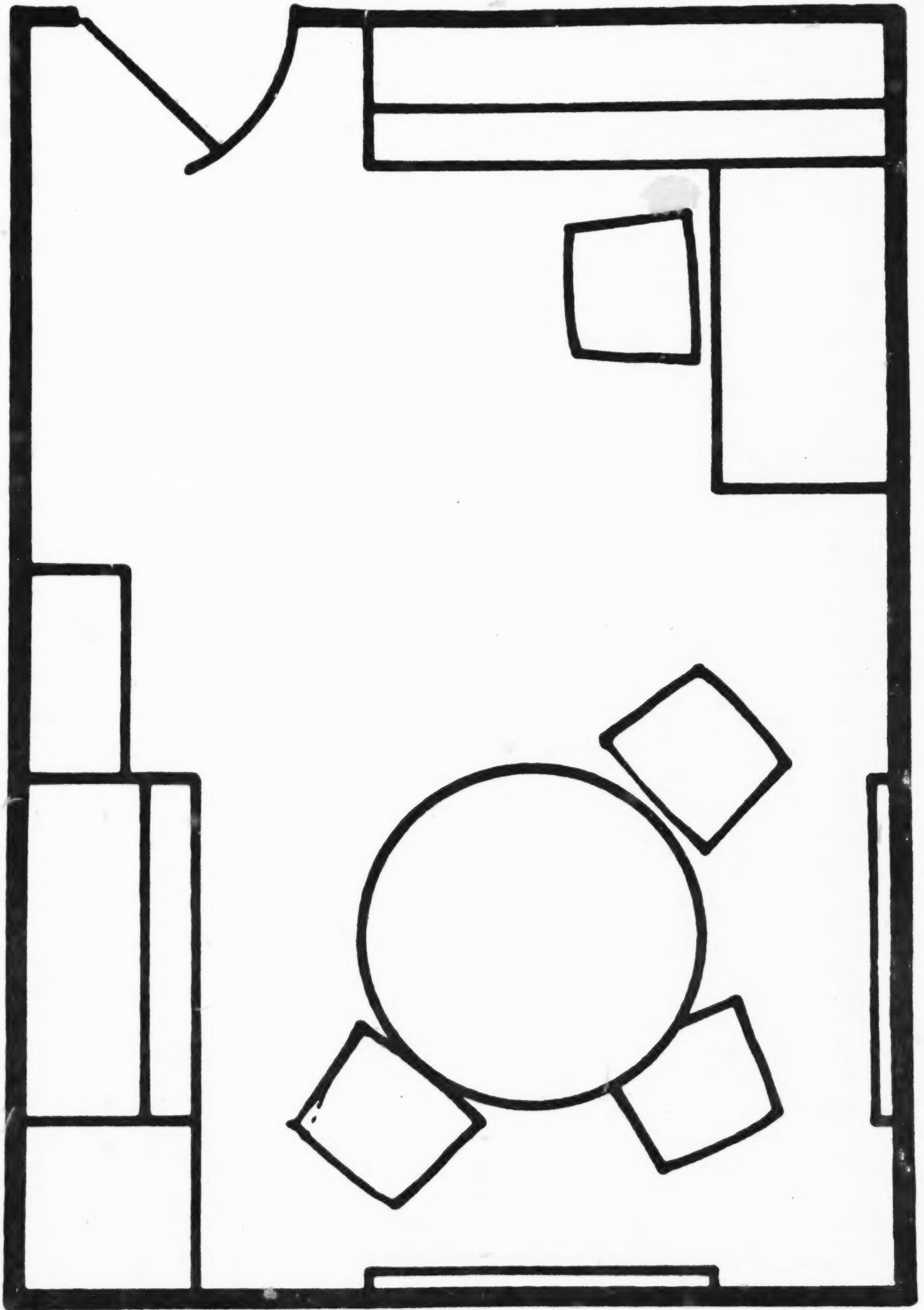
Furnishings and equipment might include:

1. Faculty work center (L-shaped): additional counter space, counter mount storage above, base storage below, swivel arm chair.
2. Conversation-study center: round table with pedestal base, guest arm chairs.
3. Tack and chalk board.
4. Audio-visual storage area.
5. File cabinet.
6. Wardrobe storage.
7. Base storage with counter work surface and counter mount storage above.
8. Optional—stand-up counter or design-drafting easel.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Social Science.
2. Behavioral Science.
3. Counseling.
4. Business and Economics.
5. English, Journalism, Philosophy.
6. Language Arts.
7. Humanities.





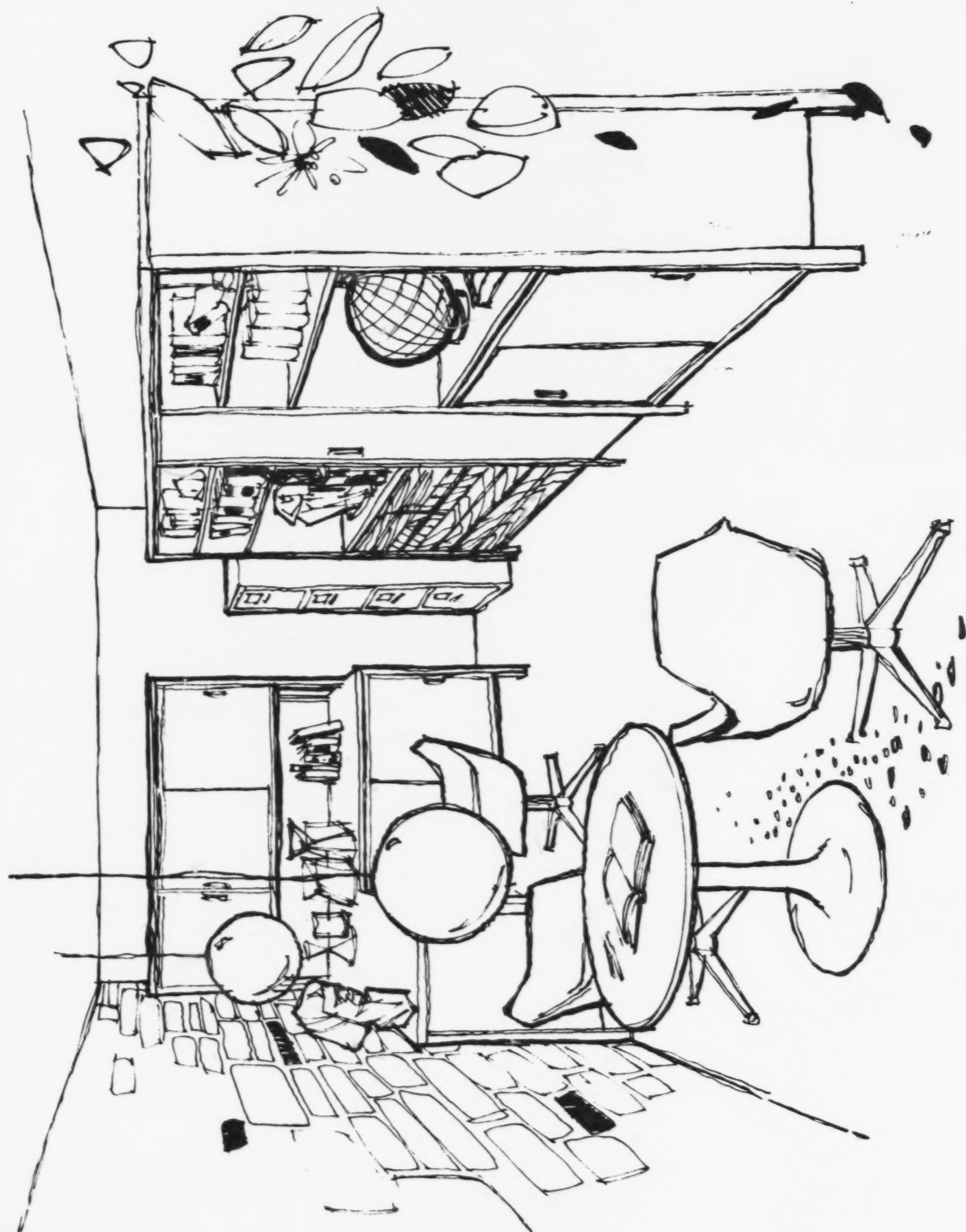
THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE Design Possibility Number Five

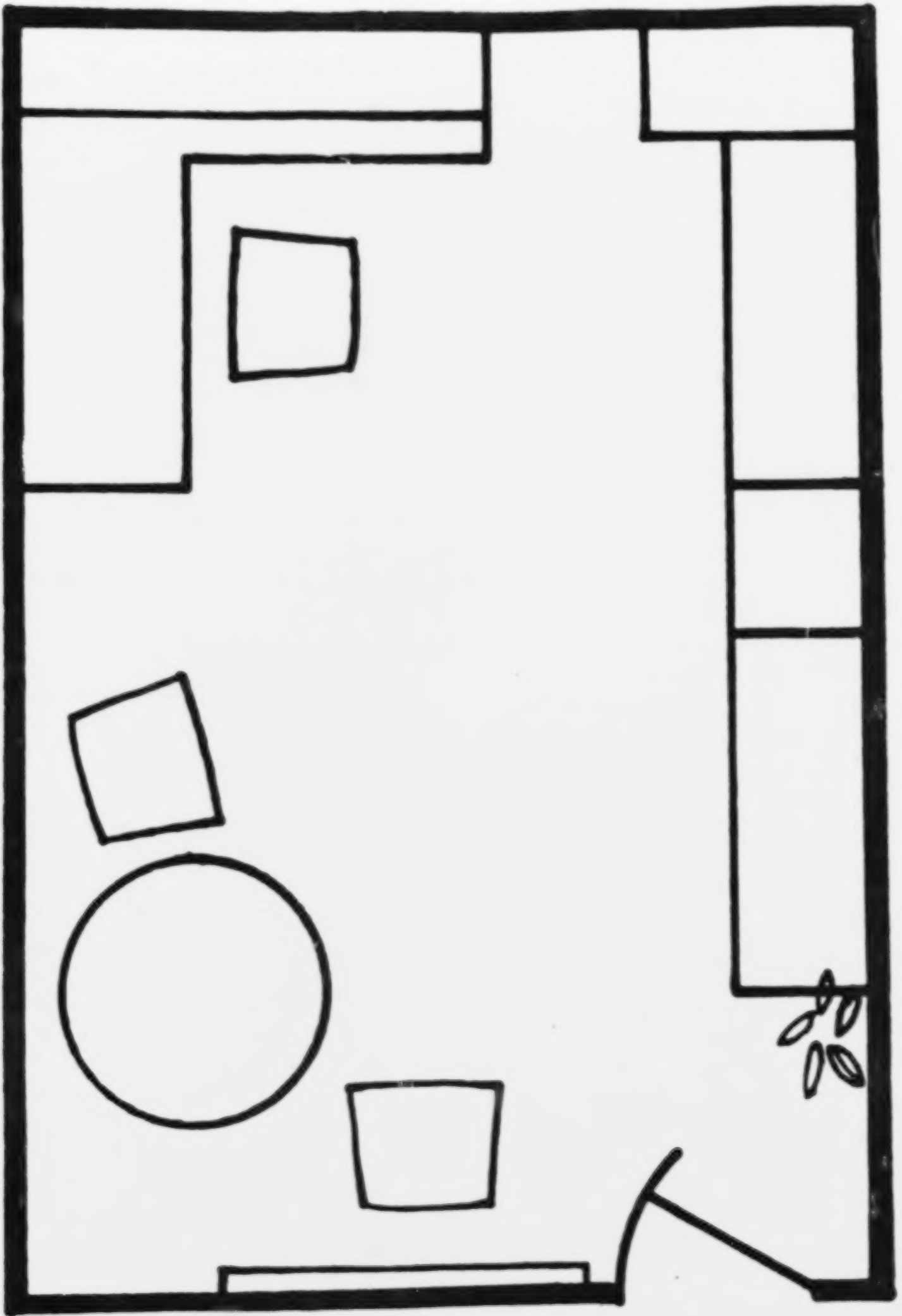
Furnishings and equipment might include the following:

1. Faculty work center (L-shaped): additional counter space, counter mount storage above, base storage below, swivel arm chair.
2. Conversation-study center: round table with pedestal base, guest arm chairs.
3. Chalk and tack board.
4. Audio-visual storage area.
5. Base storage with open storage above.
6. Drawer storage with open storage above.
7. File cabinet.
8. Optional—stand-up work counter or design-drafting easel.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Fine and Performing Arts.
2. English, Journalism, Philosophy.
3. Social Science (especially Geography).
4. Technical and Vocational Education.
5. Language Arts.
6. Behavioral Science.
7. Library Activities.
8. Humanities.





THE EDUCATOR'S "ACTION" OFFICE
Design Possibility Number Six

Furnishings and equipment might include the following:

1. Faculty work center (L-shaped): additional counter space, base storage below (open one or two sides), counter stack open book shelf storage equipped with chalk and/or tack board back panel, swivel arm chair.
2. Portable demonstration cart.
3. Audio-visual storage area.
4. Stand-up counter work area with stool: under counter storage arrangement hinged or sliding doors and various combinations of drawers and shelves.
5. Wardrobe storage.
6. High storage with tack board on hinge door face.
7. Wall mounted chalk and/or tack board.

This design *might possibly be applicable* to meet the professional needs of the faculty member operating in the following areas:

1. Biological, Earth and Physical Science.
2. Vocational and Technical Education.
3. Behavioral Science (especially Anthropology and Psychology).
4. Social Science (especially Geography).
5. Engineering.
6. Instructional Research and Development.

